

# HEALTH

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## Setting Goals for Weight Loss

There are lots of reasons for people who are overweight or obese to lose weight. To be healthier. To look better. To feel better. To have more energy.

No matter what the reason, successful weight loss and healthy weight management depend on sensible goals and expectations. If you set sensible goals for yourself, chances are you'll be more likely to meet them and have a better chance of keeping the weight off. In fact, losing even five to 10 percent of your weight is the kind of goal that can help improve your health.

Most overweight people should lose weight gradually. For safe and healthy weight loss, try not to exceed a rate of two pounds per week. Sometimes, people with serious health problems associated with obesity may have legitimate reasons for losing weight rapidly. If so, a physician's supervision is required. It is important to remember that what you weigh is the result of several factors listed below:

- How much and what kinds of food you eat
- Whether your lifestyle includes regular physical activity
- Whether you use food to respond to stress and other situations in your life
- Your physiologic and genetic make-up
- Your age and health status

Successful weight loss and weight management should address all of these factors. And that's the reason to ignore products and programs that promise quick and easy results, or that promise permanent results without permanent changes in your lifestyle. Any ad that says you can lose weight without lowering the calories you take in and/or increasing your physical activity is selling fantasy and false hope. In fact, some people would call it fraud. Furthermore, the use of some products may not be safe.

Many people who are overweight or obese have decided not to diet per se, but to concentrate on engaging in regular physical activity and maintaining healthy eating habits in accordance with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, emphasizing lowered fat consumption, and an increase in vegetables, fruits and whole grains.

Prevention Partners recommends readers visit the following websites for information about overweight and obesity or how to design a healthy weight management plan.

American Dietetic Association - <http://www.eatright.org/Public/>

American Obesity Association - <http://www.obesity.org/>

